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FARMER CO-OPERATIVE SERVICE

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ORGANIZING AND CONDUCTING COOPERATIVES' ANNUAL MEETINGS

Educational Circular 32
Farmer Cooperative Service
U. S. Department of Agriculture

FARMER COOPERATIVE SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20250

Farmer Cooperative Service conducts research; advises directly with cooperative leaders and others; promotes cooperative organization and development through other Federal and State agencies; publishes results of its research; and issues News for Farmer Cooperatives and other education material.

This work is aimed (1) to help farmers to get better prices for their products and reduce operating expenses, (2) to help rural and small-town residents use cooperatives to develop rural resources, (3) to help these cooperatives expand their services and operate more efficiently, and (4) to help all Americans understand the work of these cooperatives.

This publication supersedes FCS
Circular 22, "Making the Most of
Your Co-op Annual Meeting."

Grateful acknowledgement is expressed to the following cooperatives for photographs used in this publication:

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JULY 1967

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A well-balanced annual meeting program consists of three basic ingredients: Business, information, and entertainment.

It also should provide some opportunity for visiting among the members. This can be done during the lunch hour or at coffee breaks if these are included as part of the program.

Conducting the business phase includes such legal matters as nominating and electing directors, receiving official reports, and voting on bylaw changes and other cooperative matters.

HIGHLIGHTS

Holding a successful annual meeting requires planning ahead, getting members to help, and then carrying out the plans. The time and place have an important bearing on the attendance. Most of the activities discussed in the circular have been found basic to building and maintaining sound membership understanding as well as good community relations. Others provide variety and balance to the annual meeting program.

Informational or educational phase revolves around such activities as illustrated talks; use of charts, slides, and movies; panel discussions; question-and-answer periods; and special speakers. Keeping members and management informed is a continuous two-way process that must be worked at continually.

Adding variety and fun to the meeting may involve serving a meal or interspersing entertainment. The latter includes such items as musical selections, local

talent, quiz contests, motion pictures, and professional entertainment.

An important factor in getting out the crowd is to have something of interest for the entire family.

Numerous devices can be used to announce and publicize the annual meeting. Among these are official notices, correspondence reminders, posters, newspaper articles, radio and television announcements, and word-of-mouth publicity.

Any activities that will make the members feel welcome help to assure their coming again.

Once the details are carefully planned and delegated, the actual staging of the meeting is much simpler. The chairman is a key figure and should know his job well. Much depends also on the support he receives from the other members of the planning team.

The chairman should keep the meeting moving, preside with fairness and impartiality, maintain parliamentary order, and encourage questions and

comments from the members. A detailed step-by-step program is helpful for the chairman's guidance. (See Appendix, page 44 .)

Postmeeting activities should include preparing newspaper stories, a followup message to the members, thank-you letters to those who helped, and a frank appraisal of the meeting as a guide to the future. Planning for the next meeting should begin as soon as this one is over.

FIG. 1.--THE MEETING PLACE, AS WELL AS THE PROGRAM, NEEDS CAREFUL PLANNING

Be sure to have
enough seats --
but not too many

Check light,
temperature,
and ventilation

If you have public address system,
make certain it is in working order

Provide blackboard and visuals

If entertainment is planned,
attend to details before meeting

Food should be ready with
sufficient help to serve quickly.
Keep it simple

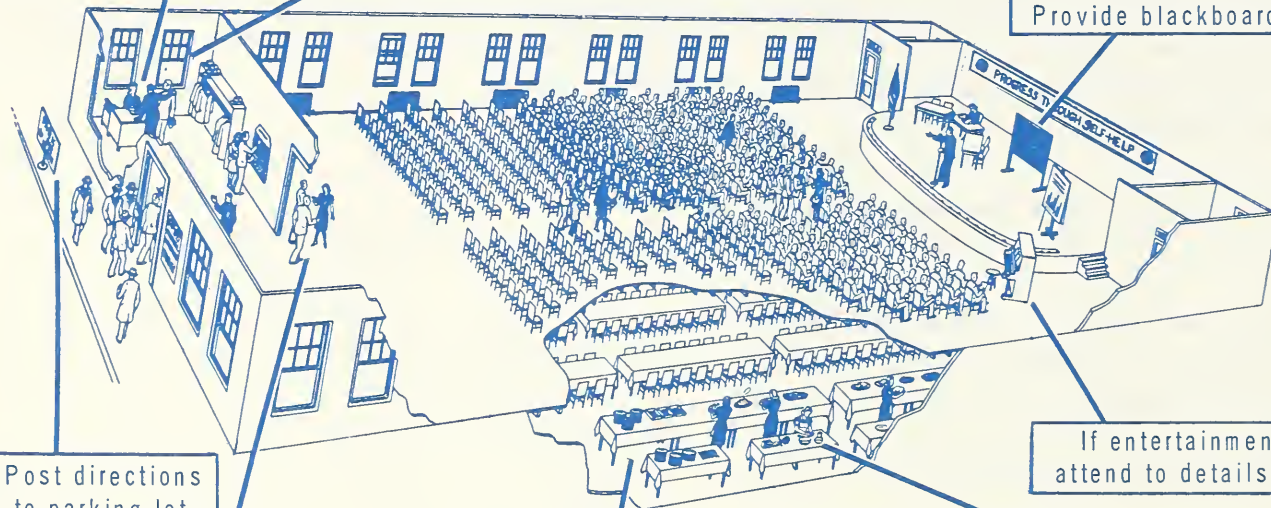
A reception committee makes
members feel at home

Registration should
be apart from the
general meeting area

Post directions
to parking lot

Women employees or members
make efficient ushers

Eating facilities
should be convenient
to meeting place



ORGANIZING AND CONDUCTING COOPERATIVES' ANNUAL MEETINGS

By FRENCH M. HYRE
Farm Services Branch
Purchasing Division

and IRWIN W. RUST
Membership Relations Branch
Management Services Division

The annual meeting is the high-water mark of the cooperative year. It is the time when management gives an accounting to the members, and when the

members--as joint owners--express their views to directors and employees.

The bylaws require an annual meeting. Every

manager wants a good one. But successful meetings don't just happen. Each detail must be planned and executed carefully. When this is done, the annual meeting program can be important in stimulating goodwill and in building membership understanding.

Farmer Cooperative Service has designed this educational circular to offer helpful suggestions to cooperative managers and others charged with this job. It is directed primarily to associations that operate locally and invite the entire membership to the annual meeting. Many suggestions, however, will be useful also to regional organizations whose annual meetings are attended by delegates.

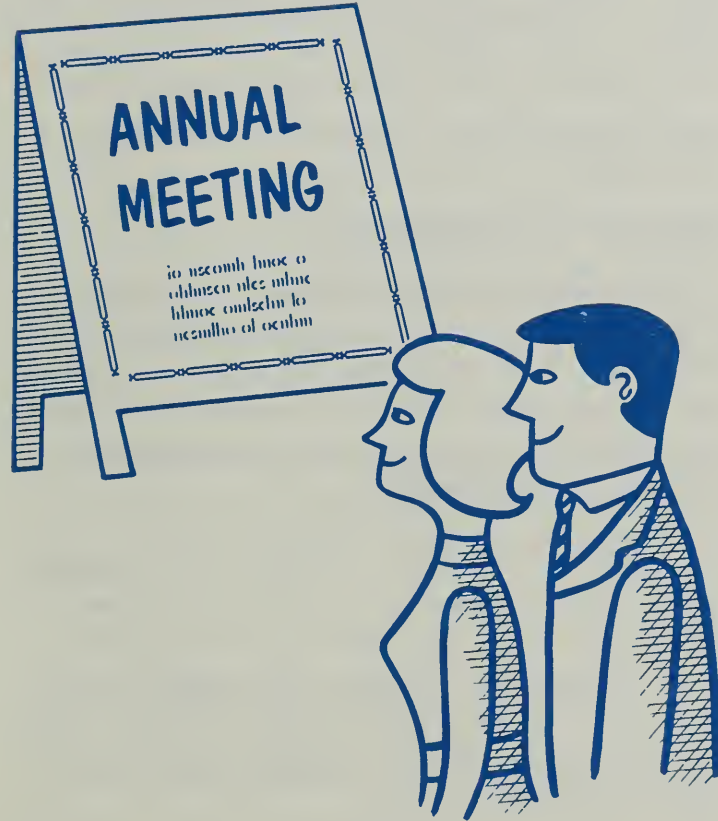
Cooperatives hold many thousands of annual meetings each year. Each meeting offers an excellent opportunity to build goodwill and to stimulate interest in the cooperative way of doing business. It provides an opportunity for the officers to sit down with the members and discuss the association's purposes, services, and accomplishments.

The annual meeting of a cooperative can be any-

thing from a routine formality to a live and memorable event.

It may require, on one hand, a frantic last-minute scurry to round up a quorum. Or it may involve a search for enough chairs to accommodate the crowd. The kind of meeting that develops is almost entirely in the hands of the board of directors, the manager, and other key employees.

If the annual meeting is held simply to comply with the bylaws, there is little chance of its being anything but drab and monotonous. If it is held in the proper cooperative spirit as a yearly occasion when members and officials of their association get together to discuss operations and future plans, results can be rewarding.



WHY HOLD AN ANNUAL MEETING?

Official purpose of the annual meeting is to review the program and the business of the cooperative for the past year, to elect officers, and to plan future activities. Holding such a meeting is a legal requirement.

The order of business is generally outlined in the association's bylaws. It includes reading the minutes, annual reports of officers and committees, electing directors, unfinished business, and new business.

Each program should provide for participation of members, their wives, and young people. This basic principle should govern all annual meeting planning.

The annual meeting gives members a chance to ask questions and offer suggestions. It provides management the opportunity to explain and discuss operating policies and to sound out reaction of members.

Management has this opportunity to instill more firmly in the mind of each member these thoughts, "This is my association. I share in its ownership and control. It is being operated for my benefit. I have a direct responsibility for its success."

Members exercise control of the cooperative at the annual meeting by: (1) Electing their directors, (2) receiving and passing upon the reports of their officers, (3) contributing comments and suggestions on the conduct of the business, and (4) voting on bylaw changes, resolutions, and matters of policy.

ELECTING DIRECTORS

The election of capable directors is the first of the members' democratic privileges and responsibilities. Generally, the bylaws provide that directors shall be elected by a vote of members at the annual meeting. It is through the power to elect directors that members exercise general control over policies of the association. This is a vital part of the annual meeting and every precaution should be taken to assure a fair and intelligent selection.

The election of directors is of prime importance because the corporate powers of an association are vested in them. They possess collectively all the powers that the association has under the law. They determine, either expressly or by implication, the acts to be performed and the plans and methods to be followed by the officers, agents, and employees of the association.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

The annual meeting provides an opportunity to bring members up-to-date on the progress of their association. It is the logical time to review and analyze the past year's business, to discuss the trends in membership, volume and costs of operations, and to go into the financial status.

Members are entitled to know all the pertinent facts concerning their organization. Properly presented and intelligently discussed, annual reports are a basis of mutual understanding between management and members. The use of well-chosen pictures, charts, slides, and other visual aids by speakers helps members grasp the highlights covered.

Annual reports can also serve a further purpose. "An analysis of the entire association setup is frequently refreshing," points out one manager, "even to those who have been in the organization for many, many years."

Those who have lived with the organization and have done their part toward helping to build it to its present position come to assume that every member of the association is equally well informed regarding all these matters. But the story must be told over and over for the benefit of those who do not know fully the nature of cooperative activities.

The highlights of the cooperative's business must be publicized for the entire membership, but particularly for members and their families attending for the first time.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Contributing suggestions is an important phase of membership participation--particularly at the annual

meeting. Members should not only be permitted to ask questions and offer suggestions, they should be encouraged to do so.

It may be desirable at times to submit certain questions to a direct vote of the members. A preparatory step, of course, is to supply them with adequate facts on which to base a decision. Whether or not a vote is taken, members are entitled at all times to a voice in the matters under consideration.

It is not possible to anticipate all the questions members will ask. Some may want to know more about the organization's capital structure or its operating policies. Others may want more details concerning operating costs. A number may have heard rumors critical of some aspect of the cooperative.

The annual meeting gives members an opportunity to bring all such matters before the association for discussion and clarification. The workshop sessions discussed on page 18 of this circular are a distinct aid in this direction.

Cooperative information is not a one-way avenue-- it is a give-and-take proposition. Much progress in cooperative organization and practices has come about as the result of practical suggestions made by members.

It should be anticipated, of course, that in general discussions opinions may differ, and occasionally heated arguments may result. These need not be harmful, and with careful handling by the chairman may be beneficial. Airing grievances and bringing to light any smoldering dissatisfactions may avoid a more serious flareup at a later time.

It is much better to have any problems and weaknesses of the association discussed in the meeting hall than to have them argued on the street corner and across the back fence.

BYLAW CHANGES

Voting on amendments to bylaws or other organization papers is often necessary. Changing economic conditions or merely the growth and expansion of the business may make it desirable for an association to change or amend its organization papers. This usu-

ally is considered and voted on by members at the annual meeting.

Not to keep the bylaws abreast of current practices and needs can lead to serious difficulties. Directors should anticipate the changes needed and recommend well-considered amendments.

Proposed amendments should be publicized in advance of the meeting with supporting arguments. This is much better than to have some hurriedly conceived action spring from the floor.

Legally, an association cannot engage in any activity, handle any commodity, or perform any service unless authorized to do so by its charter. Through its bylaws, an association regulates its voting procedure, sets the time and place of its annual meeting, and regulates transfer of its stock from one person to another.

Through its bylaws, an association may provide also for use of a contract or marketing agreement, outline the manner in which services are to be provided, and specify the procedure for accounting with members. These bylaw provisions may need to be changed from time to time.



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GUIDES TO EFFECTIVE PLANNING

The successive steps to an effective annual meeting are so simple that they are often overlooked. They involve: (1) Planning in time, (2) getting members to help, (3) carrying out the plans, and (4) arranging time and place.

PLANNING IN TIME

Advance planning is the mainspring that sets the wheels moving. Without such planning there is usually waste motion, or none at all.

Almost as important as the planning itself, moreover, is the time when planning is started. This must be far in advance of the meeting--weeks, even months before.

Detailed plans cannot be developed overnight. Qualified speakers can seldom be found at the last minute. Whether or not to serve a free lunch must be decided. Arrangements for a suitable hall with plenty of chairs, a blackboard, charts, and other essentials cannot await the day of the meeting.

The responsibility for this planning rests upon the shoulders of the manager and the board of directors. Their planning must include arranging the time and place, building up the program, getting out the crowd, and staging the meeting itself.

Stated in another way the four essentials of a good meeting are adequate facilities, a stimulating and well-balanced program, a large representative attendance, and membership participation. A meeting which falls down in any one of these respects cannot be entirely successful.

Each of the four general phases of the planning--as well as the four essentials of a good meeting--is interdependent on the others. Although these are discussed separately in the following pages, the officers and directors should tackle them together.

GETTING MEMBERS TO HELP

Like other responsibilities of officers and directors, planning the annual meeting is a job that may be delegated in part to the members themselves. The more who feel a personal responsibility in making the meeting a success, the more successful the meeting is likely to be.

Thus to help plan and carry out the meeting the president may appoint a number of special committees

to work with the association's officers and directors. Among these should be program, attendance, lunch, entertainment, and nominating committees. Your cooperative leaders will doubtless think of others.

A chairman of each committee should be named. The jobs to be done and the order in which they should be done should be listed in detail and discussed with each chairman.

In some larger associations covering wide territories, local annual meeting committees have been appointed in each district to contribute suggestions and contact the members.

CARRYING OUT PLANS

To carry out plans requires listing step by step the many jobs that need doing, assigning various tasks to specific individuals or committees, and finally following through to see that all the plans are translated into action.

Since timing is so important, it helps to develop

a calendar of things to be done. The appendix of this circular contains a suggested outline, week by week. (See page 37.)

ARRANGING TIME AND PLACE

Time and place are the first two things to be decided in planning the annual meeting. Both have considerable bearing upon the number of persons who can or will attend. Often the association's bylaws name the general time and the place, but with enough latitude to permit some choice, at least as to the actual meeting hall.

MEETING TIME

The day and hour should best suit the convenience of members. Few people can attend meetings during their busy season.

More will be likely to attend if the meeting is held some time during the slack season, after the rush or

before the next busy season has begun. Generally this coincides with the cooperative's fiscal year and permits the meeting to be held soon after the close of the year's operations.

The time of day and the day of the week also may be factors affecting attendance. If it is found that the time is inconvenient and is tending to cut down attendance, the bylaws should be amended to permit a more suitable time.

MEETING PLACE

The meeting hall should be conveniently located; have adequate seating capacity; and be comfortable from the standpoint of heat, light, ventilation, and other arrangements.

Surrounding conditions and attributes of the room itself should also be considered. Outside disturbances divert attention and detract from the success of the gathering. Avoid nearby ball games, traffic noises, building construction, and other annoying distractions.

Nearby parking and accessibility by public transportation are important.

Adequate seating capacity is necessary, of course. To invite people without providing them seats is as discourteous as it is uncomfortable. People standing, even around the edges of the room, are continually shifting and moving. This distracts the speakers and audience.

It should be possible to estimate fairly accurately the number likely to attend by considering attendance at previous meetings, by talking to members from each community, and by other advance "checking." It is better to have a meeting hall that is too large than one that is too small.

If the hall is large, a public address system will be needed. The system should be tested before the meeting and someone assigned to sit by and operate it.

Portable microphones can be scattered throughout the auditorium to encourage member participation. If portable microphones are used during question-and-

answer periods, floor discussions, and times when nominations or motions are called for, designated persons should stand by to hand a microphone to those who wish to speak.

Before a hall is finally agreed upon, someone should inspect it to make certain that the heating, lighting, and ventilation are suitable. It is essential that the meeting hall can be darkened if the program includes motion pictures or slides.

Arrangement of the room is also important. A rear entrance permits members to enter or leave with a minimum of confusion. Light should enter the room from the sides or the back rather than the front.

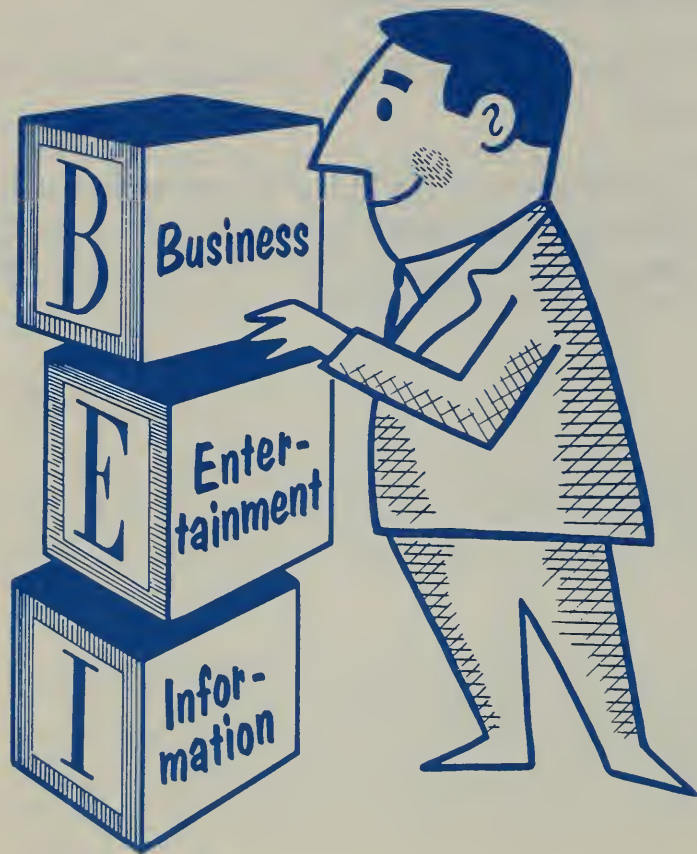
A speaker's platform is desirable, particularly if the audience is large and the floor is not sloped. It helps if the rostrum is large enough to seat the board of directors, speakers, and other program participants. A blackboard and a place to support charts may be needed for speakers.

A convenient place to hang coats and hats should

be provided. Sometimes, it works out best to have a separate checkroom for wraps.

Restroom facilities should be available and plainly marked.

The meeting hall should be decorated appropriately for the occasion. This may include the use of banners, flags, charts, and other items that help to give the meeting a "co-op" atmosphere.



BUILDING UP THE PROGRAM

A well-balanced program for the annual meeting consists of three general ingredients: Business, information, and entertainment.

The business portion includes such matters as electing directors and bylaw amendments.

The information phase is made up of reports by association officials, discussion periods, and talks by "outside" speakers.

The entertainment may be musical, a talent show, or some contest in which members themselves participate. It may include a lunch or dinner.

The individuals or the committees responsible for building up the program must first decide what is to be

included under each of the three classifications. They must next decide on the order of events. In considering the above, they must keep in mind the all-important matter of timing.

Time should be apportioned so that business, information, and entertainment parts of the program do not overbalance one another. The meeting should neither drag nor run beyond a reasonable period.

A definite closing time is as important as a definite starting time. Members appreciate knowing in advance when they will be able to return home, whether it is a daytime or a night session. Adjournment time can be listed on the program.

Hence, the time allotted to each subject on the program and its particular position on the program should be carefully planned. Each speaker should be given a definite limit on the length of his talk.

Adequate time should be allowed for discussion of reports and other matters. Make use of such periods as time needed to count ballots, for reading announce-

ments, entertainment, or presenting departmental or special reports.

Staging a successful annual meeting, like any other event in which a large number of people participate, requires a certain amount of showmanship. Showmanship is nothing more than holding the interest of a group or a crowd. Some of the fundamental factors to be kept in mind can be summarized in three simple "don'ts."

Don't deaden the meeting by confining it exclusively to business and information.

Don't let it drag by including too-lengthy speeches or too-tedious reports, or by leaving empty gaps when nothing is happening.

Don't overcrowd the schedule and necessitate omitting something toward the end, cutting the time for members' questions or running overtime.

PLANNING BUSINESS PROCEDURE

The business portion of the annual meeting includes all matters that the bylaws specify must be voted upon by members. It covers election of directors,

any changes in articles of incorporation, bylaws, or marketing agreements, and acceptance of reports. Also, it includes balloting on any policy matters which the directors may place before the members for action.

Procedure for amending the association's papers is set forth in the bylaws and requires advance notice and other legal requirements.

Procedure for nominating directors is usually defined in the bylaws. If not, it should be determined by the directors when planning the meeting.

In general, electing directors includes these two steps: (1) Nominating and (2) voting. As in other association affairs, however, a period of discussion may be introduced profitably to encourage members to think in terms of "the best man for the job" rather than in terms of "which of my friends would I like to see elected."

HANDLING THE NOMINATIONS

If nominations are made by a nominating committee, the board should appoint the committee far enough in advance of the meeting to give time for careful and

wise selection of nominees with due consideration for geographic representation.

An advantage of a nominating committee is that the members have time to seek out men considered outstanding in their knowledge of the association; their interest in its affairs; and their experience, integrity, and tact. Also the committee can ascertain in advance the candidate's willingness to serve.

One problem of a nominating committee is the possible charge that the election is being "railroaded." There is less basis for such a complaint if the nominating committee is broadly representative of the membership and if it presents at least two strong nominees for each vacancy. Members find little interest in an election that is cut and dried.

To avoid the feeling that elections are manipulated, nominations additional to those of the nominating committee should be called for and sufficient time allowed to receive them.

In some local associations all nominations are made either by written ballot or orally from the floor. The danger in relying entirely on these methods is that the

best ability in the organization may be inadvertently overlooked.

VOTING ON NOMINATIONS

Even the process of voting calls for planning. In most associations voting is done by written ballot. This frees members from outside influence or embarrassment.

Generally, it is best to have ballots printed in advance showing the nominees' names and providing space for possible writeins. Ballots may be accompanied by short statements about each candidate. A good idea is to publish names, photographs, and qualifications of the candidates in the membership publication preceding the annual meeting. Just before the balloting, each candidate should be introduced.

A tellers' committee can distribute and count the ballots. It should see that voting is conducted in accordance with the bylaws. Also the secretary of the association should preserve the ballots for a reasonable period.

As soon as the counting is completed, the chairman announces the results. This may be followed near the end of the meeting by a short installation service and brief remarks from each of the new directors. Retiring directors and the losing nominees deserve an expression of appreciation.

RESOLUTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

Voting on resolutions and bylaw changes should have a definite place on the agenda.

Usually, any proposed amendments will be initiated by the board of directors. Prior publication of the exact wording together with reasons for the proposed changes are desirable, and often required. This prepares members to vote with intelligence and dispatch.

If the voting is handled in an orderly and parliamentary manner, time allotted to proposed resolutions need not be long. Appointment of a resolutions committee paves the way for careful consideration and wording of all resolutions. The committee can help screen out trivial or ill-advised items.

PLANNING INFORMATION FEATURES

The informational part of the meeting includes: (1) Talks by association officials, (2) financial reports, (3) discussion periods, and (4) talks by "outside" speakers.

Reports and exhibits should bring them up-to-date on affairs of their association and conditions under which it operates. Moreover discussions which properly follow should give them opportunity to offer suggestions, comments, and questions.

Although annual reports are matters of business information, they should also be informational in an interpretative sense. A treasurer's report, for example, might properly consist of a simple operating statement and balance sheet. However, to present a clear and accurate picture of what the figures mean, some graphic illustration or interpretation is needed.

The president's or the manager's report, by the same token, too is a simple recitation of the past year's operations. It will be more worthwhile if it also includes a discussion of the organization's aims and

objectives, its operating policies, changes, accomplishments, problems, and unmet needs.

If handled right, the annual meeting presents an ideal opportunity to develop cooperative understanding and a desire for further cooperative action. The starting point may well be a reiteration of the principles of cooperation and a cards-on-the-table approach to the facts about cooperatives.

The informational portion of the annual meeting should be the meat of the program as far as members are concerned.

TALKS BY ASSOCIATION OFFICIALS

Two questions must be decided: Who is to speak? What subjects are to be covered? The number of speakers is limited by the warning "Don't load the program with association officers to the exclusion of other features."

If more than one officer is to speak, they should get together to plan the ground each is to cover. Some points may be so important they deserve mention by every speaker. Many others will bore the listeners if

repeated in detail. Furthermore, it is embarrassing to the second speaker to discover that part of his subject has been covered by the first.

If boundaries between subjects are clearly defined, two speakers talking 20 minutes each will probably hold the attention of listeners better than one speaker talking for 40 minutes. An unusually effective speaker may warrant an exception.

FINANCIAL EXPLANATIONS

The financial statements may be presented by the manager, treasurer, or other officer, depending on who is best equipped for the job. Some associations also arrange to have an auditor present.

Regardless of who has the assignment, the report should be prepared and presented carefully. Ordinarily, a statement of income and expense and an up-to-date balance sheet are included. Operating costs should be fully explained and compared with those of the previous year. Assets, liabilities, and net worth items should be similarly discussed and compared. Any sig-

nificant changes should be pointed out and explained.

Moreover, the effectiveness of the financial report depends as much upon the manner in which it is presented as upon its contents. Too often a good report loses significance because members are unable to follow the speaker and grasp the meaning of what he says.

This happens for two reasons. First, the average person is not familiar with the form of such reports nor with many of the terms commonly used in accounting. Terms such as "accrued assets," "fixed liabilities," and "reserves for contingencies" often leave him cold. They need to be explained in simple language.

Second, many reports are read too rapidly and contain poorly organized material. More graphic illustrations and fewer words can remedy this situation.

Assets sometimes need to be presented in terms of "what the association owns" and liabilities in terms of "what the association owes." Ordinarily, it isn't enough to point to a figure and call it "depreciation." The speaker needs to go further and discuss the rate

at which the costs of certain assets are being written off and to explain why this is considered good business practice.

Because of the nature of the financial report, the speaker must deal in terms of figures. However, to stand before a group of people and read, one by one, items on an operating statement or balance sheet is not an effective way of presenting this type of information. It goes in one ear and out the other.

It will help considerably if members can have before them a copy of the operating statement or balance sheet being discussed. A chart in front of the room, large enough for all to see, may be used. Data can be put on a slide and projected on a screen. Also, printed copies can be distributed to the members.

Individual items on the financial statement are often more significant when compared with certain other items. For example, the amount of money spent for salaries and wages has little significance except when compared with total volume of business transacted.

Loss from bad debts does not mean a great deal un-

less we know how much business was done on credit.

Repairs for machinery and equipment mean most when we know how much machinery was being used.

The figure representing "total assets" is not of much significance when it stands alone. The important things to know are how much of these assets does the association actually own and how much represents borrowed capital?

DISCUSSION PERIODS

Allotting reasonable time for discussion is an important principle of good annual meeting planning.

Discussion may be encouraged in numerous ways. A first step is to reserve definite periods on the program for discussion. Another is to develop the atmosphere: "This is your meeting; we value your suggestions and questions."

Some leading cooperatives are using the workshop technique with excellent results. This is how they do

it. When the members move into the dining hall for their luncheon or dinner they find each table accommodates six. During the meal each group selects a spokesman and agrees on some topic or question they would like to hear discussed by a panel of the management staff.

Or they may divide into smaller groups during the regular meeting period and come up with questions.

At the subsequent session officials and board members sit on the stage. A moderator then refers each question to the appropriate person for explanation or discussion.

These workshop discussion groups give members a chance to get things off their chests. Moreover, the fact that six people must have agreed on a question before it is submitted helps eliminate trivial items and improve the quality of those asked.

Referring each question to the departmental head directly responsible for that phase of the cooperative's operation means it will get the best attention possible. It also gives members a chance to become better acquainted with key employees of their cooperative.

A variation of the above is to arrange for a panel of selected individuals to discuss some timely topic. This is a good way to bring key cooperative leaders before the meeting. Under the guidance of a good chairman, such a panel discussion can be highly informative.

After members of the panel present their ideas and exchange points of view, the topic can be discussed from the floor. In this manner, participation by members is further encouraged.

TALKS BY OUTSIDE SPEAKERS

Guest speakers frequently address annual meetings. Such talks may fall under the category of "entertainment" as well as "information."

If the guest speaker is well-known or holds an important position, his presence may add prestige to the association in the eyes of the members. His appearance on the program may also help to get out the crowd.

Guest speakers, therefore, may be invited for their own sake, for the message they have, or for both reasons. They need not be prominent if they have a valuable contribution to make.

A prime consideration when deciding who to invite is the prospective speaker's understanding of the economic and political climate in which the cooperative operates. Also, the encouragement and enthusiasm he can bring to the association should be considered. The speaker should be sympathetic to association objectives.

Whatever the reason for inviting the guest, terms of his coming should be clearly stated. He may be assigned a subject or given some latitude, as the planning group thinks best. He should be given a time limit. If he is not familiar with the group he is to address, background information helps.

Valuable as a guest speaker may be, he should not be regarded as a substitute for other rightful parts of every annual meeting program. The main feature should always be active participation of members in the business of their associations.

PLANNING ENTERTAINMENT ITEMS

Good entertainment is an important ingredient for a successful annual meeting. Like seasoning on food, it makes the whole affair more attractive. It helps bring out some members and their families who might not attend. It puts the audience in a more receptive mood.

Business details and informational talks require mental concentration. Most people cannot concentrate over long periods -- their attention wanders. Therefore, it is wise to vary the program at intervals by entertainment.

Entertainment need not be costly, elaborate, or professional, but it ought to be "good."

ANNUAL LUNCHEON OR DINNER

The best entertainment of all, in the opinion of many people, is a meal--whether it be a lunch, a dinner, or simply refreshments at the end of the meeting. A meal, of course, involves some specialized planning and is best delegated to an individual or committee with no other responsibility.

Unless the meal is extremely simple, it involves knowing in advance the approximate number that will attend. Members must be contacted before the meeting by mail, telephone, or in person. This calls either for reservations or for issuing tickets. This is a job that requires a good deal of work, but it insures smooth functioning later.

MUSICAL SELECTIONS

Local soloists, duets, quartets, bands, or orchestras fit well for brief interludes on any program. They can be worked in at almost any time. Good orchestral or organ music helps set the stage for the meeting while members are assembling. Similarly, group singing and "exercise" songs help liven up the crowd. A good song leader can contribute immensely to the program.

TALENT SHOWS

Local talent show programs have special appeal to family audiences. Many associations prefer local talent rather than professional entertainers. Important sources of such local talent are the community high schools,

little theater groups, church choirs, barbershop quartets, and civic orchestra groups.

QUIZ CONTESTS

Another type of entertainment well suited to a co-operative meeting is one in which the members entertain each other. This includes question boxes and quiz contests. Such contests can be educational as well as entertaining if questions selected relate to the association and its operations.

Here again, planning in advance is essential. The master of ceremonies must not only have his contest material ready, he should also have a few bellwethers in the crowd primed to pick up cues and help put the meeting across. Games in which everyone participates can be used either to begin or to climax and wind up the meeting.

MOTION PICTURES

Motion pictures can be used with success. Usually they are best toward the end of the meeting. For maximum effectiveness each film should be introduced with

a brief explanation of its purpose and followed with a short discussion.

Important sources for educational films are Farmer Cooperative Service and Motion Picture Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, the American Institute of Cooperation, the 12 district offices of the Farm Credit Administration, the State Extension Services, the State Departments of Education, and the State Councils of Farmer Cooperatives, as well as a number of the larger cooperatives.

WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES

Women play an important role in the family farm firm, and many cooperatives recognize this by giving them an equally important role at the annual meetings.

At most successful annual meetings, women take part in such activities as registration, housing, hospitality, entertainment, and serving the annual luncheon. Many cooperatives have seen how much smoother these details are handled by a responsible committee that includes women.

Moreover, when women participate in planning the program, it is more likely to include educational and entertainment items of interest to women and youth. Women can often help recruit talent that provides variety and human interest.

As an attraction to members' wives, a number of cooperatives arrange educational tours, luncheons, teas, art exhibits, fashion shows, and other events of special interest to women. These call for special planning. They should be timed to conflict as little as possible with the main meeting.

A number of cooperatives provide nursery and child care facilities for small children so mothers can attend.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

A number of cooperatives include special features on their annual meeting programs to interest young people, the future cooperative leaders. Often these cover one or more of the entertainment features mentioned. In other instances, youth delegates who attend the State Cooperative Council meeting or the annual

summer conference of the American Institute of Cooperation may relate their experiences.

Young people are often an important part of the annual program itself, as speakers, or taking part in panel discussions, team demonstrations, or other group activities.

PROFESSIONAL ENTERTAINMENT

A wide variety of professional entertainment is available for those willing to pay for it. This includes comedians, magicians, acrobats, and dozens of other kinds of entertainers. Generally the greater the audience's opportunity to participate, the better. The entertainment committee should make it a point to be pretty sure of the contents and caliber of the program beforehand. This precaution will avoid booking acts that are unsuited for family audiences.

MIXING BUSINESS WITH FUN

In addition to entertainment, some cooperatives make the annual meeting the occasion for distributing

patronage dividend checks or equities in the revolving capital. A number of cooperatives have carried this a step further and provide on-the-spot facilities for cashing the checks, dramatizing what would otherwise be a routine business procedure.

ARRANGING FOR "PROPS"

An annual meeting requires certain paraphernalia to dress it up and to keep it moving. Assembling these odds and ends is a job in itself and may well be entrusted to a "property man." He should be in on planning from the start so he can list and secure necessary items.

These may include everything from pencils and paper for voting, to charts, diagrams, and projectors to illustrate talks. "Props" include programs, tickets, name tags, and any other printed or typewritten material. They include a gavel, ash trays, water, and other items. Some of these may be obtained on short notice, others may take days or weeks to prepare.



GETTING OUT THE CROWD

Getting members to attend the annual meeting may or may not be something of a problem. If previous meetings have been spirited, entertaining, and worthwhile, members usually respond with little urging. If not, more effort will be required.

In either case, planners must decide what it will take to draw a good crowd. It may be a meal, a good discussion, an important speaker, a quiz contest, or some special entertainment feature. It may be a combination of these.

Some associations develop a theme--an important or interesting question such as "Should the association build additional facilities?" or "Should membership be limited?"

Often attendance can be stepped up by making it a family affair, with something special that appeals to women and children. This is usually the practice of the cooperatives that have had outstanding attendance.

Some cooperatives have followed the plan of holding a general informational session in the morning, then providing separate activities for women and children in the afternoon while the men conduct the business items. Other cooperatives encourage wives to stay for the business sessions because of their important role as a full business partner in the farming operation.

Occasionally, associations will secure the cooperation of local merchants in putting on special sales the day of the meeting. The latter arrangement has doubtful value if it detracts too much from attendance at the meeting itself.

A number of associations give door prizes. Individuals receive numbered tickets as they arrive for drawing, often during the session and its close. Some give away "lucky number" prizes at various points throughout the meeting. This helps encourage attendance.

When the decision has been made on the program and its "drawing cards," the next step to secure a large attendance is advance publicity. Premeeting publicity may include: (1) Formal notice of the meeting, (2) correspondence, (3) posters, (4) newspaper stories,

(5) radio and television announcements, and, (6) word-of-mouth advertising.

THE OFFICIAL NOTICE

Bylaws of many associations provide that notice of the annual meeting shall be mailed to each member at his last-known address 10 to 15 days in advance of the meeting. A bare statement of time and place, however, does little to stimulate interest. At no additional cost, except the expenditure of some thought, the official notice can be dressed up into a sales letter that will do a lot toward creating a desire to attend. (See Appendix, page 43.)

CORRESPONDENCE

Each letter to a member during the period immediately preceding the annual meeting can be used effectively as a reminder. Some associations incorporate one or two appropriate sentences in the letter itself; others add a postscript at the bottom. In either case, only a short statement is needed. For example: "It looks as though we will have a good attendance at the annual meeting this year. I hope you are planning to

come. Don't forget the date--January 16, Community Hall at Simpson, 9:30 a.m.'"

Small folders describing the meeting may be used as stuffers in outgoing mail. A gummed label or rubber-stamped reminder of time and place may also be used on outgoing letters.

POSTERS

Much interest can be created by posters playing up the program. These can be displayed at the cooperative's offices, on its trucks, in store windows, and at other places. The art classes in high schools frequently are willing to cooperate in a poster contest with small awards and will make their entries available for display.

NEWSPAPER STORIES

A story in local newspapers a few days before the meeting may help increase attendance. Most local editors are glad to get news of this kind, especially if it is well written and contains such items as date, place, and time. Names of retiring directors, nominees, speakers, and special items of interest help to build a good release.

Many associations have their meetings mentioned in local papers as many as three times before the actual day. The first mention is a natural result of the directors setting the date and place of the meeting. The second can be centered around the announcement of the principal speaker. The third gives more details a day or two before the meeting.

An advertisement in the local paper may be helpful from several standpoints, for example, it demonstrates the cooperative's support of other local enterprises.

RADIO AND TELEVISION

All that has been said about newspaper stories applies equally to radio and television publicity. Spot announcements over local stations are increasingly effective in reaching the general public. Timely interviews between the station director and the cooperative manager can build interest in forthcoming events.

This job takes some advance work. It involves the preparation of a suitable script as well as rehearsals before going on the air.

WORD-OF-MOUTH PUBLICITY

Probably the most effective form of publicity is word-of-mouth. Employees and directors may well make a point of talking up the meeting on every occasion and during every conversation with a member. Interest can be created and the individual member can be given a feeling of responsibility if he is simply asked for suggestions.

Word-of-mouth publicity can be organized to reach virtually every member by selection of a committee, or one individual in each community, to visit or telephone members. This procedure can be further stimulated by arranging a contest with small prizes for the group or locality that has the highest percentage of attendance.

ROLLING OUT THE WELCOME MAT

Most cooperatives will wish to invite various public officials, business leaders, and friends. This is excellent public relations.

The invitation list may include a wide range of co-

operative and educational leaders such as State agricultural marketing specialists, the executive secretary of the State cooperative council, the State extension director, the State vocational education people, and other State and district leaders.

It may also include the local mayor, superintendent of schools, county extension agents, local teachers of vocational agriculture, the local editor, the local banker, the local ministers, and service club leaders. Not to be overlooked are managers and directors of neighboring cooperatives.

Good public relations require that written invitations be sent to guests by the general manager. Someone should be assigned to see that guests are greeted when they arrive and that they are formally recognized during the course of the meeting.

Members on arrival should also be greeted by an individual or welcoming committee. This committee strives to make every member and his family feel at home. It shows them where to place wraps and to register. It also supplies programs and identification cards and makes introductions to guests.

A watchful eye, a firm, friendly manner keeps the meeting on schedule and better insures that members will return home fully informed and approving of the direction their association is taking.



Some cooperatives include features on their annual meeting programs of interest to special groups-- such as young farmers.



Annual meetings help bring members up-to-date on the progress of their association. Charts large enough for all to see help explain and compare past records with the current year's operations.



An American Dairy Princess on the program is one way to enliven an annual meeting.



After all the reports and nominations have been made, voting by written ballot is one of the most effective ways members can indicate their confidence in the management of the cooperative.





STAGING THE BIG EVENT

If planning is done well, staging the annual meeting is relatively simple. The meeting, in fact, is largely "made" before it begins.

There remains, of course, actual conduct of the program. This calls for a competent chairman. With well-laid plans, even a mediocre chairman can do reasonably well. But a good chairman should assure success.

Although the chairman carries chief responsibility for final effectiveness of the planning that has been done, he needs a corps of behind-the-scene aides, each knowing his job. The chairman may be compared to the captain of a team, calling signals at the appropriate time.

JOB OF THE CHAIRMAN

The presiding officer is not only captain of a team, he is also master of ceremonies and timekeeper. From the moment he calls the gathering to order until the time he announces it adjourned, everything is in his hands.

His own advance preparation should include achieving complete familiarity with the program. He should have in mind remarks to make at various points in the proceedings. He will know the names and titles of those he intends to introduce and have enough background information about them to be able to present them properly.

Some chairmen like to prepare a special program for their own use and include in it more detail than is shown in the printed program given out to the members. The example shown in the Appendix, page 44 illustrates some things that can be done in this regard.

It is the duty of the presiding officer to (1) Keep the meeting moving, (2) be fair and impartial, (3) preserve order, and (4) encourage members to participate.

A prompt beginning and adjourning on time earmarks a well-ordered meeting. An announcement at the beginning that the session will adjourn at a certain definite hour helps to put everyone at ease. When the proceedings move smoothly the audience is much more likely to remain attentive. In addition, the chairman should manage to build up among his listeners a feeling of anticipation for some of the later features of the day.

To keep a meeting on schedule requires a watchful eye. It must be done, also, without the appearance of hurrying any who are given the floor. It must be done with full recognition of encouraging discussion and member participation.

MAINTAINING FAIRNESS AND IMPARTIALITY

A successful chairman must indicate by his attitude and conduct that he desires to be fair and impartial. He must lay aside all personal preferences or dislikes and, in any discussion, give to each side an equal opportunity to present its views. Above all, he must have a good understanding of the basic rules of parliamentary procedure. (See page 48 in the Appendix for a brief discussion of the principles of parliamentary law.)

On rare occasions, of course, the chairman may wish to relinquish the chair to the vice president and express his views from the floor. In such instances, parliamentary law dictates that he shall not return to the chair until that particular matter is settled. The chairman should bear in mind, however, that he may lose his appearance of impartiality should he take sides and participate in debate too frequently.

PRESERVING ORDER

It is the duty of the presiding officer to keep order and to see that the meeting is conducted in a business-like manner. He should not permit a member to have the floor without first addressing the chair nor permit the members to talk back and forth to each other. To bring a matter before the house officially, a motion must first be moved and seconded. Discussion may then follow.

The chairman should tactfully avoid a dragged-out debate on a motion by frivolous, trivial, or immaterial discussion. Usually he can find a convenient time to break in and ask, "Are you ready for the question?"

The chairman should not permit motions to be made and seconded when they are unrelated to the business of the association. He has the right under parliamentary law to rule out of order such motions which obviously are made to obstruct transaction of the business before the meeting.

As a matter of fact, the chairman has the right to refuse to recognize or give the floor to any one bent on obstruction. If such rights are exercised tactfully and

wisely, the chairman will find that he can keep the program moving on schedule and still not offend anyone.

ENCOURAGING MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE

As already stated, the most satisfactory meeting from the standpoint of the member is one in which he himself takes part. Not every member, of course, can be given a place on the program. However, members should be encouraged to ask questions and to express opinions before a vote is taken on special problems of the association.

Likewise, the members should have an opportunity to exchange view points on the association's operating policies and discuss plans for the future operation of the organization.

This type of participation in the program gives management a better understanding of various points of view.

If members are hesitant about entering into the discussion, the chairman may wish to invite comment with questions as: "We have heard from several of the older members regarding this question, now what do some of

you younger fellows think about it.” Or, “I don’t believe we have heard from anyone in Lewis County on this matter; what do you men think about it?”

JOB OF THE SECRETARY

The secretary of the association should record the annual meeting happenings. These cover highlights of the program and details of the business meetings--among other things, electing directors, policy decisions, and bylaw changes. The secretary is in a sense a historian.

To catch all of these details, the secretary may need a stenographer to help him. Where circumstances warrant, tape recordings may be made of the proceedings so it is possible to transcribe portions later.

With a little insistence on the part of the chairman and the secretary, most major motions can be made in writing. This results in better-considered motions and makes it easier for the secretary to record proceedings accurately.

Normally, the order of business includes reading a concise set of minutes of the previous annual meeting.

JOB OF VARIOUS COMMITTEEMEN

How well the meeting succeeds will depend in a large measure on how well various committeemen carry out their assigned tasks.

Many of these committees will need to operate in full swing on annual meeting day. Others will be well over the hump by the time the opening gavel sounds. All will get a measure of satisfaction in seeing their efforts contribute to the day’s success.

Each key chairman should make sure that all is in readiness and his responsibilities completed. Each should make known his whereabouts and stand ready to respond to last-minute additional calls from the general chairman. Little things quietly done make the difference between a good meeting and a poor one.

Finally, when the meeting is over, each key chairman should see that all properties are returned and that all who helped are thanked for their services. Also, anything learned should be preserved or passed on to guide similar committees in future years.



AFTER THE MEETING

Even after the meeting, some things can be done that will add to its effectiveness. These include: (1) Preparing newspaper stories and publicity on what was said and done, (2) a followup message to the members, (3) sending thank-you letters, and (4) appraisal of the meeting.

NEWSPAPER STORIES AND PUBLICITY

Newspaper stories on the annual meeting provide an opportunity for a cooperative to sell itself to the general

public. For this reason a news article, to be most helpful to the association, should have a strong lead--facts or figures reported at the meeting or some outstanding statement of one of the speakers.

It should also include such information as time and place of the meeting, who presided, number attending, a brief resume of the program, names of prominent persons, and a list of the new directors.

FOLLOW UP REPORT TO MEMBERS

A summary of what happened at the annual meeting is important both to members who attended and to those who were absent. For those who attended, it helps pull together highlights of the meeting. For those who were absent, it is an essential step in keeping them informed. Since many associations do well to have 25 or 30 percent of their members attend an annual meeting, it is particularly important that there be a good followup message to all.

One of the best ways to disseminate highlights of an

annual meeting is through the cooperative's regular member publication.

Other ways this information can be brought to the members are through local meetings, radio and television interviews, and mimeographed letters, or news stories.

THANK YOU LETTERS

Immediately following the meeting some associations send a letter to each person who had a part in the program to thank him for his assistance. This builds good will for the association and shows these persons that their time and effort was appreciated.

APPRAISING THE MEETING

Soon after the meeting is the best time to size up the program as a whole and to appraise its strong and weak features. This is a good time to lay the groundwork for next year's meeting. Officers and directors should get together as soon as possible to talk about the effectiveness of the meeting and possible changes for another year.



APPENDIX A

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX E



A.--CALENDAR OF THINGS TO DO

A Checklist to Aid in Annual Meeting Planning¹

<hr/>		<hr/>
(Name of cooperative)		(Meeting date)
<hr/>		
Check when done	Things To Do _____ (At least five weeks before) (Date)	Whose job? (Fill in name)
_____	1. Hold annual meeting planning conference. Include several women and older youth in planning group and special committees.	_____
_____	2. Appoint committees for such major jobs as program, nominations, reception, and resolutions.	_____
_____	3. Settle on date and place of meeting. Check to avoid conflicts. Reserve meeting hall. ¹	_____

¹ The above checklist, is intended primarily as a guide. Each cooperative may wish to prepare its own list, including only those items that are applicable. In some cases, arrangements for a meeting hall and extending invitations to principal speakers may need to be done more than 5 weeks in advance. Some large associations set the date and arrange for a meeting hall a year in advance.

- | | | |
|-------|---|-------|
| _____ | 4. Invite special speaker and get his acceptance. ¹ | _____ |
| _____ | 5. Plan entertainment and make sure it is available. Draw on local talent, if possible. | _____ |
| _____ | 6. Plan to serve food: Promptly, attractively, adequately. | _____ |
| _____ | 7. Plan conference with auditors on scope of annual audit. | _____ |
| _____ | 8. Set up a budget for the meeting. | _____ |

Things To Do _____ (Four weeks before)
(Date)

- | | | |
|-------|--|-------|
| _____ | 9. See that each special committee understands its work and is functioning. | _____ |
| _____ | 10. Have a brief summary of annual report printed. | _____ |
| _____ | 11. Prepare annual meeting notice for mailing to members and press. Address envelopes. | _____ |
| _____ | 12. Complete guest list. Plan to recognize key officials, old members, new members, and friends. | _____ |
| _____ | 13. Invite local Vo-Ag classes, 4-H clubs, and other youth groups to the annual meeting. | _____ |
| _____ | 14. Line up public address system, projectors, and other equipment. | _____ |
| _____ | 15. _____ | _____ |

Things To Do _____ (Three weeks before)
(Date)

- | | | |
|-------|--|-------|
| _____ | 16. Notify members of annual meeting in accordance with bylaws. | _____ |
| _____ | 17. Send news item to local papers and radio stations, giving program highlights. Put advertisement in papers. | _____ |
| _____ | 18. Prepare charts showing growth in volume, refunds, etc. | _____ |
| _____ | 19. Arrange for co-op banners and signs. | _____ |
| _____ | 20. Plan merchandise and educational displays. | _____ |
| _____ | 21. Order programs and literature needed. | _____ |
| _____ | 22. _____ | _____ |

Things To Do _____ (Two weeks before)
(Date)

Whose job?
(Fill in name)

- | | | |
|-------|--|-------|
| _____ | 23. Check arrangements for food--estimate probable number. | _____ |
| _____ | 24. Post notices with date, place, and time for meeting. | _____ |
| _____ | 25. Mail letters to special guests, including the press. | _____ |
| _____ | 26. Send additional news to local papers and radio stations. Include background of speaker, etc. | _____ |
| _____ | 27. Check with secretary on minutes of last annual meeting and roll call. | _____ |

- _____ 28. Have reminder notices printed and addressed. _____
- _____ 29. _____ _____

Things To Do _____ (One week before)
(Date)

- _____ 30. Mail reminder notices to all members. _____
- _____ 31. Check with committees to make sure that nothing has been
overlooked. _____
- _____ 32. Prepare meeting agenda CAREFULLY. _____
- _____ 33. Notify speakers and entertainers when each is to appear on the
program, and for how long. _____
- _____ 34. Notify reception committee to be on hand early. Make sure they
are instructed to seat latecomers properly. _____
- _____ 35. Arrange for reporters and photographers. _____
- _____ 36. _____ _____

Things To Do _____ (Day before meeting)
(Date)

- _____ 37. Check meeting place for heat, light, ventilation, chairs, tables, _____

registration facilities, ballots, pencils, chalk, blackboard, electric outlets, rest rooms, etc.

- _____ 38. Put up co-op banners and posters. Create the "co-op meeting" atmosphere. _____
- _____ 39. Erect merchandise and educational displays. _____
- _____ 40. Remind local editor that he is invited. _____
- _____ 41. Check with photographer regarding pictures desired. _____
- _____ 42. _____

Things To Do _____ (Day of meeting)
(Date)

- _____ 43. Check the auditorium for temperature, ventilation, and general physical comfort. Know where to find extra chairs if needed. _____
- _____ 44. Give final instructions to reception and registration committees. Assign places to ushers. _____
- _____ 45. Check to see that meal arrangements have been completed. _____
- _____ 46. Supervise those to whom responsibilities have been delegated. _____
- _____ 47. Begin on time, stay on time, close on time. _____
- _____ 48. _____

Things To Do	_____ (Date)	(Day after)	Whose job? (Fill in name)
_____	49. Clean up premises and return borrowed equipment.		_____
_____	50. Make report to local newspapers and to co-op's editor.		_____
_____	51. Send roundup report to all members giving the annual meeting highlights.		_____
_____	52. Send thank-you letter to key individuals who participated.		_____
_____	53. Invite members and employees to appraise meeting and to suggest improvements.		_____
_____	54. _____		_____

B.---ANNUAL MEETING NOTICES

This annual meeting notice, mailable on a postal card, has the advantage of brevity:

Farmville, Va., April 1, 19

Dear Member:

The annual meeting of the Farmville Farmers Exchange will be held Saturday, April 10, 9:30 a.m. sharp at the Farmville High School. You are urged to attend.
Cooperatively yours,

GENERAL MANAGER

But this one is much more likely to create interest and help bring out the crowd.

January 16--Mark It on Your Calendar!

That's the date for the annual meeting of the Simpson County Farmer Cooperative--and we know you'll want to attend! The meeting will be held in the Community Hall and will start promptly at 9:30 a.m.

An exceptionally fine program has been arranged--plenty of entertainment, worth-while speeches, and interesting reports. Music by the "Old Grey Mare Band."

A copy of the printed "timetable" of the various events is enclosed. You will note that Dean Jones from the State College will be with us again. The Dean's talks are always good. His subject this year is "How to Build a Better Co-op." You owe it to yourself to hear him.

The Auditor's report will be streamlined and modernized through the use of charts, maps, and diagrams. Your association has just completed one of the most successful seasons in its history. Mr. Brown will tell you where the money came from and how it was distributed.

These are only two of the many interesting features. There will be plenty of time for discussing the association's problems. Come prepared to take part. Now is the time to bring up those questions that you have had in mind concerning the association and its operations.

P. S.--Don't forget the date. January 16, Community Hall at Simpson, 9:30 a.m. We'll be looking for you.

C.--DETAILED PROGRAM FOR CHAIRMAN

10:00 a.m. Call the meeting to order promptly.

1. Ask everybody to stand and join in singing "The Star-Spangled Banner."
2. Invocation.
3. Welcome members.
 - (a) Ask those who are attending their first annual meeting to raise their hands high, their second, their third, their fourth, their fifth, and those attending their sixth to stand. Ask for applause.
 - (b) Express pleasure to see visitors (such as the county agent, the mayor, the chamber of commerce

secretary). Introduce them. Indicate our appreciation of their interest in our association and their cooperation with us.

4. State purposes of the meeting.
 - (a) To report to members on the general and financial affairs of their association.
 - (b) To elect two directors for 3 years to fill the two expiring terms.
 - (c) To give members an opportunity to express their views regarding the association and make suggestions for improvement.
 - (d) To give the members an opportunity to become better acquainted with the directors, officers, employees, and each other.
5. Mention briefly the program for the day.
 - (a) The main features of the morning program. (1) Address by Dean Jones; (2) Report to Board of Directors; (3) One-Act Skit by 4-H Club Members.
 - (b) Time and place of lunch (12:00 in basement of this building).
 - (c) Main features of afternoon program. (1) Annual Business Report; (2) Committee Reports; (3) Election of Directors.

(d) Time of adjournment (promptly at 4:30 p.m.).

6. Appoint Miss Harris to take minutes of the meeting.

7. Have the secretary read official notice of the meeting. Order the notice and affidavits filed with the minutes of the meeting.

8. Have the secretary read the minutes of the last meeting.

(a) Ask if there are any corrections or additions. If none, state that the minutes will stand approved as read.

10:30 a.m. Introduce Dean Jones:

Dean of State Agricultural College--keenly interested in cooperatives--relationship between college and this association--work done at college.

After address call on Miss Smith for vocal solo.

Express our appreciation for her kindness in appearing on the program.

11:00 a.m. Present the Board of Directors' report, using the outline previously prepared.

1. Ask the other members of the board of directors whether they would like to add anything to the report.

2. Call on the members for questions concerning the report.

11:30 a.m. Announce 4-H Club Skit.

12:00. Make announcements regarding luncheon and the afternoon program.

1. Lunch will be served immediately in the basement of this building. The ushers at the rear of the room will direct you to the basement.

2. After lunch we will reconvene in this room and start the afternoon session promptly at 1:15 p.m.

The afternoon session will be the business session. It is important that as many members as possible be present.

Afternoon Program

1:15 p.m. Call the meeting to order.

Announce that the meeting will be adjourned promptly at 4:30 p.m. and urge the members to remain until that time.

Call on the manager to present the Annual Business Report. Just before the manager starts his report announce that a panel of four members have been selected to ask questions after the presentation of his report, and the financial report which is to follow.

- (a) Ask the panel members selected to please come forward and occupy the chairs provided here in front.
- (b) Introduce the members of the panel--C. R. Worth, B. K. White, G. W. Green, and Bill Barnes.
- (c) Mention that panel members were given copies of the two reports in advance of the meeting so that they would be prepared to ask questions that would interest those attending the meeting.

1:45 p.m. Call for financial report by Mr. Blank, Treasurer.

2:15 p.m. Call for the panel questions.

1. When panel members finish asking questions on the report, ask audience if they have any other questions they would like to ask before we proceed to the next order of business.
2. When discussion of questions asked is completed, call for a motion to accept the reports as presented.
3. Order report filed with minutes of meeting.

2:45 p.m. Announce that the next 45 minutes will be given over to committee reports.

1. Call on Mr. Ortiz to report for the committee that was appointed to study the advisability of building a new warehouse.

- (a) Ask what action the members wish to take on this report.

2. Call on Mr. Laws to report for the committee on "Dividend Policy."

- (a) Ask what action the members wish to take on this report.

3. Call on Mr. Abbot to report for the membership committee.

- (a) Ask what action the members wish to take on this report.

4. Ask whether there is any other unfinished business to come before the meeting.

3:30 p.m. State that we are now ready to elect two directors for a 3-year term.

1. Explain the importance of the election.
 - (a) It is the members' opportunity to exercise control over their association by electing the men they feel are best qualified to represent them.
 - (b) Every member has only one vote regardless of the amount of stock he owns so every member is on an equal voting basis.
 - (c) We want this to be a very democratic election with everyone taking part and asking any questions they care to.

2. Indicate that the two directors whose terms expire are A. M. Johnston and C. J. Casto.

3. Indicate how the nominating committee of three members was selected. The members of this committee are Howard Franklin, James Hall, and John Johnston.

(a) Mention that nominating committee was instructed to inform the members of the qualifications they considered a director should have and the basis on which they selected their nominees.

4. Call on Mr. Franklin, chairman of the nominating committee, to make the report of that committee.

5. Call for any nominations from the floor. Allow ample time and encourage such nominations.

(a) The name and address of anyone nominated from the floor should be written on the blackboard and the person making the nomination asked to say a few words about experience and qualifications of the man he nominated.

(b) After all nominations from the floor have been made or if there are no nominations from the floor, state that a motion is in order for the nominations to be closed.

6. Ask all those nominated to please come to the front so they may be introduced.

7. Remind the members that they are to vote for only two of the candidates nominated.

8. Ask the ushers to collect and count the ballots.

Announce that the "surprise" listed on the program will be a 5-minute concert by "Smoky" Smoot and his one-man band. Call on "Smoky" to begin the concert.

Announce the results of the election. Express to the retiring directors the appreciation of the association for their services.

4:15 p.m. Ask whether there is any other business to come before the meeting.

1. Get each proposal in the form of a motion. Ask for a second. Give time for discussion. After each vote announce whether the motion carried or failed.

2. Express appreciation for the interest members have taken in the meeting and the pleasure of having so many of them attend.

3. Ask members to give us any suggestions they have regarding this meeting and ways to improve next year's meeting.

4. Ask members to join in popular patriotic song.

4:30 p.m. Call for a motion to adjourn.

D.--PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Cooperatives have their full quota of meetings--boards of directors and membership gatherings in the main. All of them need to be conducted on a businesslike basis and follow general rules that have developed over the years.

The president usually is chairman of the co-op meeting. Upon him lies the responsibility for keeping the meeting running smoothly and headed in the right direction. He must know how to get the meeting started and, equally important, how and when to stop.

Before the "meeting will come to order" call goes out from the chairman, he and the people assembled before him need to understand why certain procedures are followed. These reasons are based on principles of parliamentary law that are the outgrowth of long years of development of our democratic procedures.

The chairman and his audience will then need to know how to proceed--that is, the proper order of business, and how many must be present to make the meeting binding.

Since any group meeting is guided by a chairman or presiding officer, it is his responsibility to be familiar with the principles and practices of orderly and democratic group action. And if a member wishes to speak, he will feel less self-conscious if he has an idea of the correct way to present his ideas.

PROCEDURES IMPORTANT

Let us turn first to why we need to know parliamentary procedure. Strict knowledge of and adherence to the laws of such procedure make for a healthy, well organized and efficiently operated cooperative meeting. Failure to observe the rules leads to dissension, misunderstanding, inefficiency, and loss of those individual rights associated with a democracy.

Parliamentary law is designed to enable meetings to be conducted smoothly and fairly. Like other laws governing social behavior, parliamentary law, as expressed in rules of order, has been developed out of years of experience in living together and working together democratically and harmoniously. Since the majority rules in a democratic organization, parliamentary law is designed to aid in finding what the majority wishes and assuring that those wishes are carried out.

In special cases, organizations may have a rule calling for more than a majority vote on an issue. This could be designed to protect the minority in vital issues, but it also makes it possible for a minority to thwart the will of the majority. A person joining a democratic organization knows that in such a group the majority rules and that in joining such a group he is agreeing to abide by the will of the majority. At the same time, the minority in an organization has a right to be heard in discussions, and to oppose actions contemplated by the majority.

Every member of an organization has equal rights and privileges and in return owes the organization equal obligations. Every member may propose motions, vote, ask questions in meetings, and nominate officers.

Conversely, every member must respect the rights of other members, must take an intelligent part in the affairs of the organization, and must express himself where such expression is called for. Such expression may take the form of a vote, or perhaps participation in discussions.

In this connection, it is important that every member has a right to insist upon a complete discussion of any issue involving a decision by the group, and to take part in such discussion. In order for discussion to be fruitful, members in attendance at a meeting must know what is going on. For example, the presiding officer must make it

clear to members what motion is being discussed, what its effect will be, and the manner in which parliamentary law applies to procedural motions relating to the main motion.

The presiding officer may engage in general discussions, but should be careful to observe strict impartiality. If he wishes to engage actively in debate on a question, he should turn his chair over to a vice-chairman and speak from the floor. His chief responsibility is to so conduct the meeting that parliamentary procedure is carefully observed.

Much of the business of a meeting is implemented through motions which will be discussed more in detail later. With motions as with other meeting activities, parliamentary law calls for the simplest possible method of conduct and action. If one motion can be made which will accomplish the same purpose as two or more consecutive motions, the one motion should be used.

It is the duty of the presiding officer to make sure that the simplest and most direct solutions to problems be used. Any attempt to complicate issues should be ruled out of order.

To this end, each motion before a meeting must be considered separately. When a question is being considered, the presiding officer may only entertain (permit) a motion having higher priority. This is because there is a precise

order of priority for motions, based on their relative importance.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The program for a meeting is called the order of business. In organizations operating in accordance with a written constitution or bylaws calling for a definite sequence of business, the order can be changed by motion to suspend the rules. With groups not so formally organized, an established order of business may be changed by unanimous consent.

If a change of the usual order of business will enable the meeting to proceed more efficiently and expeditiously, such a change should be made. The order of business of any meeting, be it a board or committee meeting, general member meeting or convention, is designed to aid, not hinder, the conduct of the affairs of the group. It is a tool, not a master. As a general rule, the following order of business is a good one to use:

1. Call to order. The presiding officer calls the meeting to order by some suitable announcement such as: "Will the meeting please come to order."

2. Invocation or prayer. If an invocation or prayer is to be said, the chairman calls upon someone present. Cour-

tesy dictates that the person chosen to give the invocation be consulted prior to the meeting so that he will be prepared when called upon.

3. Roll call. The chairman may next ask the secretary to call the roll, especially if it seems necessary to assure the presence of a quorum. A roll call is not mandatory, but may be desirable, depending upon the circumstances.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting. The presiding officer next calls upon the secretary to read the minutes of the previous meeting. Corrections or additions are then called for, following which the chairman may declare the minutes to be approved as read, or as corrected, or may entertain a motion to that effect.

5. Reports. Following the reading and approval of the minutes, the chairman may call for committee reports.

6. Old business. Next comes any unfinished business. The chairman should declare that "unfinished business is now in order." It is the chairman's responsibility to have a record of any old business, which may include motions postponed from previous meetings as well as matters set up in the agenda for the meeting in question.

7. New business. At the conclusion of unfinished business, the chairman then calls for new business, saying "New business is in order." If nothing is brought up by those present, but the chairman knows of matters which

call for action, he should so state, and ask members if they care to make any motion on the matters suggested.

8. Announcements follow the conclusion of new business, coming first from members and last from the chairman.

9. Adjournment. When announcements have been completed, and the presiding officer has made sure that no further business needs to come before the meeting, or perhaps that time is running out, should call for a motion to adjourn.

The motion to adjourn takes precedence over all other motions, requires a second, is not debatable, must have a majority vote, and must be put to a vote immediately after it has been made and seconded. If the motion to adjourn carries, the presiding officer must declare the meeting adjourned. The meeting is not officially adjourned, however, until the announcement is actually made by the presiding officer.

Step number 3 above mentions the roll call as a method of establishing whether a quorum was present. A quorum is the number of members, or the percentage of total members in good standing, who must be present at the meeting in order for it legally to transact business. A meeting at which a quorum is not present should not be called to order except to vote to adjourn to another meeting time. A quorum is not required to vote to adjourn.

In many organizations the requirements for a quorum are set out in the bylaws.

In organizations which find it difficult to persuade members to attend meetings, the quorum may be set very low. Those organizations whose membership is apt to fluctuate may find it to their advantage to set the quorum at a percentage of the total membership, say one-fourth or one-fifth. Some organizations provide that the members present at any meeting, regardless of their number, shall constitute a quorum.

Lacking any written provision, parliamentary law holds that a simple majority of the members constitutes a quorum.

If a member at a meeting feels that a quorum is not present, he has a right to ask for a roll call, and the presiding officer must order the secretary to call the roll.

MOTIONS AND RULES FOR DISCUSSING THEM

Making motions and then talking them over before voting are important parts of a business meeting. The how-to is important, also, to be sure standard meeting procedure prevails. First we will take up motions.

Motions are the tools used to bring up the formal business at a meeting. Motions are of two basic kinds: (1) Those calling for some kind of action--for example, "I move that the XYZ Cooperative purchase one-half-ton pickup truck," and (2) those putting the organization on record as expressing some sentiments or opinion--for example, "I move that this cooperative adopt the following resolution: 'Resolved: that XYZ Cooperative is in favor of taking an active part in National Farm and City Week.'"

This is the way to present a motion. The member wishing to make the motion rises and addresses the presiding officer, using his official title or simply saying, "Mr. Chairman" or "Madam Chairman." The presiding officer then calls for a second to the motion, unless it has already been seconded, saying, "Is there a second to the motion?"

Following the seconding of the motion, to make sure that everyone has heard it and that the secretary has it properly recorded in the minutes, the presiding officer restates the motion as follows: "It has been moved and seconded that - - - - Is there any discussion?" After the restatement by the presiding officer, the members may discuss it and then vote.

The presiding officer must exercise great care to observe parliamentary law applying to motions. A motion may be made only after the last speaker has finished his re-

mains, yielded the floor, and the presiding officer has recognized the new member. He does this by addressing the rising member by his name, if it is known, or by some other acknowledgment which will make it clear just who is being recognized.

Where several members simultaneously want to be recognized, the order of preference for recognition may be as follows: The member who explains a proposal should have the first opportunity to offer a motion. The member who has not engaged in the discussion should be recognized ahead of one who has already spoken. The member who rarely speaks should be recognized before the member who is constantly on his feet. The member who is opposed to a proposition should be given an opportunity to follow one who is in favor of the proposition.

As a general rule, after a motion has been made it must be seconded by another member, who need not wait for recognition from the presiding officer. This requirement is based on the theory that a motion must be of interest to at least two members of an organization if it is to be allowed to take up the time of the group.

If there is no second, even after the presiding officer has restated the motion and has called for a second by saying, "Is there a second to the motion?" he should state: "The motion is lost for lack of a second."

FOUR MOTIONS

Four classes of motions are used in meetings, and they must be voted upon in a definite order of preference.

Main motions are those which formally state and bring business before a meeting. "I move that XYZ Cooperative buy a pickup truck," is an example of a main motion. Main motions are voted upon last in the order of precedence.

Subsidiary motions amend or in some way alter the disposition of main motions, and must therefore be considered and voted upon ahead of the main motion to which they apply. An example of a subsidiary motion would be, "I move to insert the word 'half-ton' before the word 'pickup,'" or "I move that the purchase of a pickup truck be referred to the finance committee."

Incidental motions must be acted upon before subsidiary or main motions in the order of precedence and usually involve such matters as rules of order and the rights of members. For example, if the presiding officer entertains an amendment before a previous amendment has been acted upon, a member may rise and say, "I rise to a point of order. There is already one amendment pending." The chairman would agree and rule the second amendment out of order.

Privileged motions have the highest priority, and must be acted upon ahead of any other motions which may be

pending. The three privileged motions in the order of their priority are: (1) to adjourn, (2) to recess, and (3) personal privilege.

For example, a member may interrupt a speaker to say, "Mr. Chairman, I rise to a point of personal privilege. The light on the stage is shining in our eyes and we are unable to see the demonstration." It is the duty of the presiding officer to attend to the matter at once, since it involves the immediate comfort or right of a member.

As a general rule, when a member has been recognized by the chairman and given the floor--that is, the right to speak--he may not be interrupted.

However, there are a few instances where a speaker may be interrupted by another member wishing to make a motion which by its nature is subject to a time limit or which requires immediate attention. For example, a motion to reconsider a vote must be made at the same meeting at which the vote was taken, or the next business day if the meeting is part of a convention program. If the motion to reconsider is not made within the time limit specified above, it may not be made at all.

In the same way, a motion requiring immediate attention, such as a question involving personal privilege (the light shining in the member's eyes, for example) or a question

involving a point of order or parliamentary law, may interrupt the speaker.

With the exception of the motion to reconsider a vote, or to appeal a decision, of the presiding officer, the motions which may interrupt a speaker do not require a second.

Most motions are subject to discussion and debate before they are voted upon. Exceptions to this rule are motions which deal with procedure. Since rules of order and parliamentary law carefully outline procedure for meetings, motions involving procedure can be decided without debate.

Motions can be amended whenever it is possible to vary their form, or wording, without upsetting the central thought. For example, "I move that XYZ Cooperative purchase a pickup truck" could be amended to read "I move that XYZ Cooperative buy a half-ton pickup truck."

It would not be permissible to amend this motion to provide for the purchase of something other than a pickup truck. The proper procedure would be to dispose of the original main motion by vote, and then introduce a new motion covering the additional or alternate purchase.

EVERY MEMBER CAN TAKE PART

One of the most important rules of parliamentary law is that every member of an organization has the right to take

part in any discussion of business matters at meetings. This is not to say that every member must speak. But if a member wishes to enter into debate on an issue, he must be given an opportunity to be heard.

Fully debatable motions include main motions, motions to amend, to appeal, and to postpone indefinitely. As mentioned previously, a few motions, those involving matters of parliamentary procedure, are not debatable. Debate on a few others, such as a motion to refer a main motion to a committee, is limited to matters like powers and personnel of the committee, and may not involve the merits of the main motion.

Certain rules for debate insure an intelligent and orderly discussion. A member wishing to discuss a motion rises when the previous speaker has finished his remarks and addresses the chairman, saying, "Mr. Chairman," and waits to be recognized. As with the original motion, the chairman recognizes him by some phrase which will make it clear to all who is being given the floor (recognized), such as "Mr. Smith," or "the member in the aisle seat in the fourth row."

Having been recognized, the member wishing to speak has the right to be heard as long as he likes, so long as he conforms to the rules of debate. These rules are:

1. The member's remarks must pertain to the question being debated. If he wanders off the subject the chairman

must ask him to confine his remarks to the pending question.

2. The member's remarks must be impersonal. The motion being considered, not the member who proposed it, is the subject for debate.

3. The member's remarks must be orderly and courteous. Rude language is sufficient cause for the chairman to refuse the offending member further right to the floor.

4. The presiding officer must assure that the member holding the floor is being heard. He must insist that the members listen to what is being said, and must not allow any irrelevant discussion.

5. When all who wish to speak have spoken the chairman brings the question to a vote by saying "Is there any further discussion?" If there is none, he then puts the question to a vote.

Even after part of the vote has been taken, if a member wishes to discuss the question he has that right. Should such an event occur, the entire vote must be taken over again. Only when the chairman has announced voting results is debate on a question finally closed.

VOTING, NOMINATING, AND KEEPING MINUTES

Under standard meeting procedure come the duties of voting, nominating, and keeping minutes. The presiding of-

ficer is on hand to see that these activities are carried out according to convention. First we will discuss voting.

VOTING

It is a fundamental principle of parliamentary law that the will of the majority rules in a democratic organization. That will is expressed by vote. But there are a number of different concepts of what constitutes a majority. Majority is defined as being "the number greater than one-half." So any number in excess of 50 percent is a simple majority. The problem is to determine "50 percent of what?" All the members? All the members present? A quorum? The total votes cast?

Most organizations operating with a set of bylaws specify in the bylaws the requirements for a quorum. It is a good idea for the bylaws also to define the word "majority" as applied to that organization. In the absence of specific definitions, over 50 percent of the members of an organization constitutes a quorum, and over 50 percent of a quorum constitutes the majority required to take action binding on the organization.

For certain important decisions, such as amending the bylaws, many organization bylaws require a majority vote greater than a simple majority, say 75 percent of the total membership.

In the case of a tie vote the presiding officer may cast the deciding vote, unless he has already voted.

Where there are more than two alternatives, or more than two candidates to be chosen from, it is possible to have a plurality but not a majority vote for one of the issues or candidates. A plurality would be a total of votes greater than any one of the others received, but not greater than the combined votes received by all the others. Unless the organization bylaws permit it, a plurality is not sufficient to pass a motion or elect a candidate.

There are several means by which a vote may be taken. The most common is the voice vote. Here the chairman calls first for the affirmative (in favor of) vote, "All those in favor of this motion please say 'aye,' " and then calls for the negative, "All those opposed please say 'no.' " The chairman decides whether or not the motion has passed on the basis of the relative volume of voices voting.

If the results of a voice vote are uncertain, the chairman may call for a show of hands, or for a rising vote. "Will all those in favor of the motion please rise," and have the secretary count the number voting for and against.

Still another method of voting is the roll call vote. Here the secretary calls the roll and records the "yes" or "no" vote of each.

If it is desired to keep the voting secret, it may be done by ballot.

Regardless of the method of voting used, a member may change his vote up to the time the chairman has announced the results.

The chairman always announces results when voting is completed. If it has been a voice vote the chairman will say, "The ayes (or noes) have it. The motion is carried (or lost)." If some member questions the voice vote he may call for a division of the assembly (an actual count of the affirmative and negative votes) in order to determine more accurately the voting of the members.

If the vote has been by ballot or roll call, the chairman must announce the number of votes, reading the affirmative vote first, "The vote is: for--25; against--20; the motion is carried." Both in taking a vote and in announcing the results, the affirmative vote comes first.

NOMINATING

Nominations of candidates for offices and committees of an organization may be made by any member present at a meeting where nominations are in order or may be made in the form of a report of a nominating committee.

There are a number of advantages to using a nominating committee. Prospective candidates can be interviewed ahead of time to see if they are willing to serve if elected. Their qualifications can be checked. Where different groups exist, or different areas are represented within an organization, the nominating committee method makes it possible to spread officers evenly among the various groups or areas.

The chairman opens nominations at a meeting by saying, at the proper time, "Nominations for the office of _____ are now in order." If there is a nominating committee, the chairman at this time will call for the committee report. The report of the nominating committee constitutes nomination of those persons named in the report for the various offices to be filled.

The chairman then asks for any further nominations for each office in turn from the floor (the rest of the members present at the meeting) and adds these names to the names presented by the nominating committee.

If there is no nominating committee, of course all nominations come from the floor. To make a nomination from the floor a member rises, is recognized by the chairman and says, "I nominate Mr. X for------(president, secretary, or another office)." Nominations do not require a second.

As each nomination is made the chairman should repeat the name so that every one present knows who is being nominated. Then the secretary records it.

When the chairman feels that no more nominations will be made for an office, he says, "Are there any other nominations for the office of---?" If there are none, he proceeds to open nominations for the next office, and so on until there are nominees for all the positions to be filled.

In voting, members do not have to vote for nominated candidates, but may vote for any member who is eligible, except when voting is by voice vote.

Some meetings do not go through the formality of nominating candidates when voting is done by ballot. Without benefit of formal nominations, members vote for the eligible member of their choice for each vacant position.

Unless provided for otherwise in bylaws, a simple majority of all votes cast is necessary to elect a nominee to office. Lacking such a majority, the vote must be taken over. This could happen if there are several candidates for one office. One way to solve this problem, should it arise, would be to require that the candidate with the smallest number of votes withdraw from the race at each successive balloting.

In the absence of provision to the contrary in the by-laws, a candidate takes office as soon as elected if he is present at the meeting and agrees to accept the position, or if he is absent but has agreed to accept if elected. If he is not present and has not been consulted, his election becomes effective as soon as he has been notified and has not refused to serve.

KEEPING MINUTES

The secretary keeps the minutes of the meeting. They are a record of what took place at the meeting, and they list things done, business introduced, motions made, committee reports submitted, voting on motions.

If a vote is counted, or a roll call taken, the secretary should read the figures and names. Although the secretary may summarize reports, it is better to put in the minutes simply that the report was made, and then say the copy of the report is on file with the secretary for complete details.

Usually it is good practice for the secretary to make notes as the meeting progresses and then write up the final minutes after the meeting is over. When completed, minutes are filed in a special minutes book. They must be signed by the secretary, and kept in his possession, subject to inspection by any member who wishes to see them.

There is no place in minutes for editorializing. Such remarks as "There was a witty exchange" or "Mr. X made an excellent report" are out of place. Minutes record business, not emotions.

The opening sentence in the minutes of a meeting should include the name of the organization, type of meeting (regular, adjourned), the time, place, date, and name of the chairman.

It is good practice at each meeting to hear the minutes of the previous meeting. Minutes give continuity to a meeting, bringing the members up-to-date on organization affairs. Where the reading of minutes is deferred, this continuity is lost.

It is the duty of the secretary to read the minutes. At the proper place in the order of business, the chairman should call for the secretary to read the minutes of the previous meeting. When the secretary has finished reading, the chairman should say, "Are there any additions or corrections to the minutes?" If none are suggested, the chairman then says, "If not, they stand approved as read."

If corrections are suggested they may be adopted by unanimous consent, or put to a vote if there is a division of opinion as to the corrections suggested. After corrections

have been made the chairman may then say, "If there are no further additions or corrections, the minutes will stand approved as corrected."

After the minutes have been approved, either with or without corrections, the secretary writes "approved" at the bottom of the minutes, the date of the approval, and his name or initials.

The key person at any meeting, whether it be a board of directors, a committee, or a meeting of all the members, is the presiding officer, usually the chairman. It is his responsibility to make sure that each one present has had a chance to express himself, and at the same time see to it that the business for which the meeting was called is taken care of.

To do all those things the presiding officer must be tactful, courteous, must know all about the business of his organization, and must have a good grasp of parliamentary procedure. He must keep the discussion focused on the problem at hand, must be able to guide the meeting without coercing the members, and must be at all times impartial and impersonal.

The presiding officer has a number of duties he cannot delegate to others. He must call the meeting to order, dis-

pose of the business at hand in the proper sequence, keep the meeting orderly. He must recognize members who wish to speak, must restate all motions to be sure that all have heard, and if possible explain the effect of the motion where uncertainty exists. He must keep any discussion centered on the problem, and must understand parliamentary law well enough to keep the meeting functioning in accordance with that law.

With a presiding officer who can do all these things, meetings will be interesting, democratic, and fruitful.

E.--PUBLICITY CHECKLIST

1. 2 months before meeting . . .

First news release. Use in co-op paper or statewide publication. Include brief background on meeting--theme, anticipated attendance, principal speaker.

2. 1 month before . . .

Second news release. Send to local papers, statewide publication. Use in co-op paper. Enlarge on information included in first release. Include photos of last year's meeting--crowd shots, contest winners, beauty queen contestants, entertainers, prizes awarded. In co-op paper, give instructions on how to get to meeting place, parking facilities, and perhaps a sketch of the flow of traffic within meeting area. Note location of registration tables, stage, exhibit area, etc. Include special instructions for meals.

3. 2 weeks before . . .

Send releases to local newspapers, radio, and TV stations. In addition, to straight news items, place ads with local media. Be sure your material reaches weekly papers in time for their next publishing date (usually by Friday for papers published on Wednesday). Schedule releases so weekly papers will not be scooped by dailies.

4. 1 week before . . .

Follow procedure similar to previous release. Include

principal speaker and the like. Make personal visits to local editors and broadcasters to remind them of meeting, and invite them to cover it. Try to arrange for a 2-page spread in local paper showing importance of co-op to community, co-op members and employees active in civic affairs, historical background of co-op, etc. If possible, provide arrangements for live TV coverage of meeting. Consult local TV and radio station personnel on possibility of obtaining public service time.

5. 2 days before . . .

Arrange for photographic coverage of meeting. Place posters or guide arrows leading to meeting area.

6. Day of meeting . . .

Have ready for distribution to all news media, copies of key speeches, reports, biographies of board candidates, background notes on important visitors, guests, and the like. Prepare copies of important resolutions that develop during meeting.

7. Day after meeting . . .

Prepare follow-up material for local media, co-op publication. Give highlights of meeting--co-op progress reports, newly elected directors, winners of contests, size of attendance. Include feature angles--member coming longest distance, oldest member attending, and the like. Have selection of photos to cover major points of story.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Managing Farmer Cooperatives. Educational Circular 17. Kelsey B. Gardner.

Assuring Democratic Election of Cooperative Directors. Educational Circular 21. Irwin W. Rust.

Using Cooperative Directors To Strengthen Member Relations. Educational Circular 23. Irwin W. Rust.

Directors of Cooperatives and Their Wives--A Good Member Relations Team. Educational Circular 25. Irwin W. Rust.

Recognizing the Ideal Co-op Director. Educational Circular 26. Irwin W. Rust.

Bylaw Provisions for Selecting Directors of Major Regional Farmer Cooperatives. General Report 78. Helim H. Hulbert, David Volkin, and Nelda Griffin.

Directors of Regional Farmer Cooperatives--Selection, Duties, Qualifications, Performance. General Report 83. David Volkin, Nelda Griffin, and Helim H. Hulbert.

Improving Management of Farmer Cooperatives. General Report 120. Milton L. Manuel.

Membership Practices of Local Cooperatives. General Report 81. Oscar R. LeBeau.

Making Member Relations Succeed. Information 32. Irwin W. Rust.

A copy of each of these publications may be obtained upon request while a supply is available from--

Farmer Cooperative Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250